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NEWS RELEASE

March 22, 2005

Contact: Sally Thompson, director, UM Lifelong Learning Project, (406) 243-5889,
sally.thompson@umontana.edu.

DOCUMENTARY VISITS DESCENDANTS OF NATIVE PEOPLE ENCOUNTERED BY LEWIS AND CLARK

MISSOULA —

A new documentary that allows viewers to visit the descendants of American Indians encountered by Lewis and Clark will premier Tuesday, March 29, in Missoula.

“Contemporary Voices Along the Lewis and Clark Trail” will be shown at 7 p.m. in the Missoula Art Museum’s temporary quarters in the downtown area’s Florence Building. The event is free and open to the public.

The half-hour film was produced and directed by Sally Thompson, director of the Lifelong Learning Project at The University of Montana. The documentary is a dialogue with 18 men and women who represent 13 tribes from the hills and plains of Kansas to the mouth of Columbia River. Filmed on location, viewers are taken to tribal homelands to hear elders and educators tell their stories about life after Lewis and Clark.

“Lewis and Clark are history,” Thompson said, “but these tribes are not.”

Since 2001, Thompson, an anthropologist and educator, and videographer Ken Furrow have interviewed 100 people in 27 tribes from St. Louis to the West Coast, documenting the ongoing stories of tribal members still living in the same areas where the Corps of Discovery met their ancestors two centuries ago.

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The film documents the traditions, history, challenges and wisdom of people who still live along this historic trail. Topics include the importance of place names, treaty history, the reservation experience, the impacts of boarding schools, the revival of native languages, the tragic story of Clark's Nez Perce son, the legacy of repatriation and the future of the homelands that American Indians have cared for "since time immemorial."

Thompson said the project was undertaken in cooperation with the tribes, working with tribal advisers in each region. Production was supported by UM and the National Park Service through a Challenge Cost-Share Program grant.

A companion film, "Native Homelands Along the Lewis and Clark Trail," will be shown after the premier of "Contemporary Voices." Both documentaries are available in DVD and VHS formats at the Bookstore at UM for \$19.95. They can be ordered online at <http://www.umtbookstore.com>.

UM's Lifelong Learning Project works with tribes to produce top-quality resource materials about American Indians. Products include Web sites and video and print media. For more information, call Kim Lugthart at (406) 243-5890. For more information about the tribes encountered by Lewis and Clark, visit <http://www.trailtribes.org>.

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